Six Elements for Creating

A Digital Historical Narrative

While some digital stories are about personal experiences, digital historical narratives describe and interpret historical events from a unique point of view. They combine audio narrative with visuals and images of an event from the past and bring it to life. You can select maps, illustrations and photographs to illustrate the story based on the character that you create. As well, digital historical narratives often include a musical soundtrack that enhances the tone, the timing and the subject matter.

Writing a script for the narration is the first step in creating a digital historical narrative. There are six elements that you’ll want to consider.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Element | Description |  |
| Dramatic Question | The dramatic question is the topic that is the central part of the story you wish to tell – often it will show some type of conflict or problem that sets the story in motion. It is the part of the story that creates interest and anticipation in the audience. |  |
| Point of View | Digital historical narratives tell about an event from a particular point of view to illuminate an event from history. The character should be telling the story from his or her own experience. Keep in mind that the character might not have as much information about the Vietnam War as we do. The point of view will also help you determine how to creation the emotional content in the narrative. |  |
| Emotional Content | Like the dramatic question, emotional content helps to grab the audience’s attention and keep them interested in the narration. Our goal is to make history come alive with our stories. Consider how you might feel and think if you were in your character’s place and time in the Vietnam War. |  |
| Economy and Pacing | Economy and pacing are the speed at which your story unfolds. If you go too slowly, the audience might be bored and if you go too quickly, your audience will be confused. For parts that are very dramatic, build the tension slowly with emotional content but not too much since digital historical narrative are usually short and concise (2 – 3 minutes) not like a long documentary that looks at every angle. |  |
| Voice & Narrative | The tone and pacing of the narrator bring all the elements together. Read the script out loud so you can hear how it sounds and what images it brings to mind. The narrator should practice the script several times before recording to get the “voice” right.  Choose your soundtrack from the music library that will enhance the story, but not overpower it. |  |
| Storyboard | Use the storyboard template to organize the narrator’s script, your images and ideas before you record the narration in Photo Story. |  |

Adapted from [*The Digital Storytelling Cookbook*](http://www.storycenter.org/storage/publications/cookbook.pdf)  by Joe Lambert, Center for Digital Storytelling, 2010.